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AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MONTHLY.

U. S. Department of Agriculture,
Office of Experiment Stations,
Agricultural Education Service.

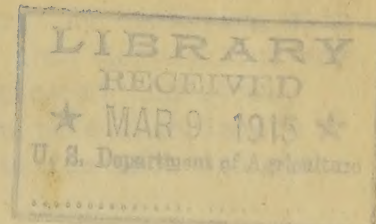


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PURPOSE OF THE MONTHLY.

Many requests are received from those interested in teaching agriculture in secondary schools for current information which will aid them in meeting their problems. It is the aim of this monthly to furnish a medium through which such information may be supplied at regular intervals. In addition to items of general interest pertaining to methods, references and suggestions will be given upon timely topics suitable for subject matter.

ORGANIZATION OF THE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL TEACHING.

A group of men interested in secondary agriculture met in Chicago on April 10, 1911, and spent a day in discussing some of the problems of agricultural teaching. At this meeting a temporary organization was formed and plans made to meet the following year in connection with the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations. At the latter meeting the following constitution was adopted. Annual meetings have since been held, the last being at Washington, D. C., in November, 1914. The present officers of the association are A. V. Storm, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn., president; W. H. French, Michigan Agricultural College, East Lansing, Mich. vice-president; and A. C. Monahan, U. S. Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C., secretary.

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I--Name.

This organization shall be known as the American Association for the Advancement of Agricultural Teaching.

(American -Continental Use.)

ARTICLE II--Objects.

The objects of this Association are to promote the teaching of agriculture and to advise ways and means for increasing the efficiency of such instruction in elementary and secondary schools, and in colleges and universities.

ARTICLE III--Membership.

Any person engaged in the teaching of agriculture in any school in

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ARTICLE III - Membership

Any person engaged in the teaching of agriculture in any school in

America, or in promoting such teaching, may become a member by complying with the terms of this constitution. Associate membership in this Association may be had through approved state organizations of the same general character, which organization shall be entitled to representation in this Association through one delegate at large, and one additional delegate for each ten state members.

ARTICLE IV--Meetings.

An annual meeting shall be held, the time and place to be determined by the executive committee at least four months before the date set for such meeting.

ARTICLE V--Officers.

The officers of this association shall be a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and three other members, who together with the above mentioned officers, shall constitute the executive committee. The officers shall be chosen annually by ballot.

ARTICLE VI--Duties.

The duties of the officers shall be such as usually devolve upon corresponding officers in similar organizations.

ARTICLE VII--Fees.

An annual membership fee of one dollar shall be paid by each member of the Association. Subsidiary organizations shall pay a regular annual membership fee of one dollar for each delegate to which they are entitled in this association.

ARTICLE VIII--Procedure.

The business of this association shall be conducted under the rules of procedure which usually apply to similar organizations. A majority of paid up members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE IX--Amendments.

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of those voting on the amendment. Proposed amendments must lie on the table one year before such vote can be taken.

ARTICLE X--Ratification.

This constitution shall take effect and be in force when ratified by a two thirds vote of the charter members.

Adopted November 14, 1911, at Columbus, Ohio.

THE USE OF LAND IN CONNECTION WITH AGRICULTURAL TEACHING.

A committee of the American Association for the advancement of Agricultural Teaching has been investigating "The Use of Land in Connection With Agricultural Teaching." As an aid to the work of this committee, two questionnaires were sent by this Office to schools teaching agriculture for the purpose of ascertaining what is being done in this matter.

Of a total of 550 questionnaires sent out in April, 400 replies were received. Of the 27 special agricultural schools reporting, 25 reported that they had land. Of the 259 high schools, 165 reported land, and of the 101 normal schools 66. A total of 257 schools reported land owned, but of these only 82 reported farm animals.

Over one-half of the 257 farms consist of 6 acres or less. There were less than 60 farms with over 20 acres. The reports indicate that some of the farms are rented and that a diversity of crops is grown.

In the answers to the second circular it was ascertained that the land is used chiefly for demonstrations and for growing seed for distribution. Some land is used for school gardens and for producing dormitory supplies. But a small portion of the land is used for the raising of material for laboratory work and for projects for individual students.

A question was asked as to whether the teacher could conduct agricultural instruction without a school farm. The replies were almost equally divided between those who could and those who could not, but an analysis of the replies shows that those who are willing to get along without the land are those who have none at all, or those who have but small farms, and whose students are living upon farms while attending school.

The answers to a question regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the school farm would indicate that the advantages are chiefly educational, and the disadvantages in connection with its management. Most of the instructors appreciate the opportunity to make their work practical, to secure laboratory material and to make demonstrations for the benefit of students and farmers. Difficult problems in management often arise, however. In the North, especially, many of the farms are small, the land poor, and help and equipment inadequate. The teacher is often poorly paid and crowded with other work; yet he is expected to make good in the management of the school farm. Making good in the minds of most farmers means to make the farm pay. A great many of the successful ones are centering their efforts upon such high-priced products as pure-bred seed corn. The idea of using the school farm as a center for pure-bred seed and for pure-bred animals wherever possible is worthy of consideration. In the South several of the farms are furnishing the boys of the pig clubs pure-bred stock with which to begin their work.

On most of the farms the work of the student consists chiefly in preparing the land, and in planting and harvesting the crop. Little of the cultivation is done by the student. The aim is to teach general principles rather than the technique of farming.

Nearly one-half of the schools reported their students doing home project work. The amount and character of the work varies greatly. While there is little of this work done in the South as most of the students are boarding at the school, there is some well-organized and supervised work in the New England and Middle Atlantic States.

About one-half of the instructors indicated that they are engaged with the boys' and girls' clubs and other forms of extension work. Among the types of extension work are organization of farmers' clubs, cow testing and other live stock work, pure-bred seed distribution, speaking at meetings, and giving advice to individual farmers. About one-third of the teachers reporting are engaged for the entire year so they may have time to devote to extension work.

The average boy leaves the high school when he is 18 years of age. He is 25 or 30 years old before he settles down on a farm of his own. It would seem that it should be within the province of the teacher of agriculture, through his home project work, to follow up his students and aid them in becoming partners of their fathers upon the home farm. The census returns indicate that where the tenant is the farmer's son and has had the advantage of high-school training there is less likely to be a shifting. It would seem that the teacher of agriculture might do much toward solving the shifting-tenant problem.

FARM PRACTICE IN HIGH SCHOOL COURSES IN AGRICULTURE.

At the meeting of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, held in Washington, D. C., November 11, 1914, the Committee on Instruction in Agriculture made another report concerning farm practice in college courses in agriculture, which should be of interest to the progressive teacher of agriculture in the high school.

The report shows clearly that teachers in the agricultural colleges are realizing the great need of more practical work in connection with theoretical instruction. The college men admit that this work comes more within the province of the high school, but are urging that more attention be given it in the college because so many students enter college who are ignorant of common farm practices.

Teachers of agriculture in the high school should give more attention to practical work not so much because the colleges desire such training as an entrance requirement, as because the high school, even more than the college, should make its work practical. A greater percentage of high school students than of college students are to become farmers.

It is not always an easy matter to connect classroom instruction with farm practice. Problems arise in the equipment of laboratories and school farms, and in the utilization of the farms of the community.

A good deal of trouble may arise through a lack of a definite plan for field trips and practicums. The following incident from the committee's report illustrates well the suggestion often made that students will get out of their work in proportion to what they put into it:

"An instructor took a squad of boys to the orchard for a spraying practicum. Hired men brought out the team, wagon, and spray rig and applied the solution, while the boys looked on and the instructor explained. It was very interesting for a little while, then one boy started "chinning" himself on a nice, smooth apple-tree limb and all the others had to try it. Throwing pebbles and using apple-sprout switches were other diversions which added to the pleasure of the afternoon. They didn't even soil their clothes.

"Another instructor took 18 students in slickers and rubber hats to the barn. The students hitched three teams to three wagons containing three different kinds of spray rigs. They drove to three different parts of the orchard and commenced spraying trees--six men to a wagon, a driver, two pump men, two nozzle men, and one man on the ground to see that the trees were properly covered. The instructor was here and there, first with one squad and then with another, suggesting, directing, but not driving--that was unnecessary. At the end of 20 minutes the men changed work--the pump men went to the nozzles, the nozzle men pumped, and the driver and walking boss changed places. At the end of 40 minutes they changed again, so that at the end of one hour every man had done every kind of work on one rig. Then the squads changed from wagon to wagon, and in another hour they changed again, so that in 3 hours every student had done every kind of work on three different types of spray rig, and every man knew how the work was done. That was efficiency in handling students and it was possible only because the instructor had made definite plans in advance. With enough duplicate machinery that instructor could have handled 36 students as easily and almost as well as he did 18. His work was planned. He knew what each student was to do every minute of the time, and every student knew."

Teachers interested in these subjects will find helpful suggestions in solving these problems in the report of the committee which may be secured by addressing this Office.

At the meeting of the Faculty of the University of Chicago, held in the Administration Building, December 17, 1911, the Committee on Lectures in Agriculture made a report upon the progress of the work in the department, which showed an increase in the number of students in the department. The report also stated that the department was in the process of reorganization, and that the department was in the process of reorganization, and that the department was in the process of reorganization.

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- Harper, M. W. "Breeding Farm Animals." Orange Judd Co., New York, N. Y.
- King, F. H. "Soil Management." Orange Judd Co., New York, N. Y.
- Wortley, E. J. "Poultry Diseases and Their Treatment." Orange Judd Co., New York, N. Y.
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- Lloyd, Jno. W. "Productive Vegetable Gardening." J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
- Snyder, Alva. "Fights of the Farmer." J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
- Lewis, H. R. "Productive Poultry Husbandry." J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
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- Olin, W. H. "American Irrigation Farming." A. C. McClurg & Co., New York, N. Y.
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- Cheyney E. G. & Wentling, J. P. "The Farm Woodlot." The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y.
- Dadisman, S. H. "Elementary Exercises in Agriculture." The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y.
- Piper, Chas. V. "Forage Plants and Their Culture." The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y.
- Slingerland, M. V. & Crosby, C. R. "Manual of Fruit Insects." The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y.
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- Georgia, Ada E. "Manual of Weeds." The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y.
- Gay, Carl W. "The Principles and Practice of Judging Livestock." The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y.
- Hitchcock, A. S. "A Text-book of Grasses." The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y.

